

Consumer officers

State, city & county consumer administrators held their first meeting of the newly formed National Association of Consumer Agency Administrators in Milwaukee last month. For purposes of membership, administrators must have responsibilities in the areas of consumer education, legislation, complaint handling, enforcement, investigation and research.

For more information about the association, contact the association president: Wanda Merrill, Administrator, Consumer Services Division, Commerce Dept., Salem, OR 97310; telephone: 503-378-4320.

Consumer careers

Interested in a career in consumer affairs? According to a new study just released by the University of Utah & the American Council on Consumer Interests, (ACCI) the occupational field of consumerism is growing, but still has far to go. The study, which is entitled "Educational & Career Opportunities in the Consumer Field" suggests that probably the best place to look for a job in consumer affairs is with government because not only is government's role in consumerism expanding but it is also more apt to hire people from outside its organization. Other career opportunities are becoming available in business & education but usually require a more specialized background, the study reports.

Besides reporting on job availability, the study also examined educational opportunities in the consumer field. It found that:

- Over 50 colleges & universities offer degree programs in the consumer field. While most of the programs are offered by schools or departments of home economics, the study reports that there is great variety in the kinds of graduate & undergraduate programs being offered.

- In addition to college degree programs, a number of institutions offer special workshops in consumer affairs. Most of these workshops are geared to help train teachers so they can develop consumer programs in the schools but there are also seminars on special consumer problem areas such as credit & financial management.

- Academic majors that best prepare the student for a career in the consumer field are business administration (especially for a job with business), home economics, education & law. Although a Bachelor's degree is usually the minimum requirement, the study found that a student may have an advantage in getting a job or advancing more rapidly with some graduate work.

The study can be ordered by sending \$1.75 to Family & Consumer Studies, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs
Virginia H. Knäser, Director

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Deceptive mail-vertising

Postal Service (PS) administrative law judges have issued mail-stop orders for false representation through the mail against 3 companies: (Mail-stop order by PS means a company will no longer receive mail.)

- Jackson State University [not Jackson State University in Mississippi] (also using the names Church of Universal Education, Jackson State University Nationwide Counselors, Nationwide Educational Counselors West) used mailing addresses in Pasadena, CA, Nashville, TN, Phoenix, AZ, and Los Angeles, CA. Company was offering high school diplomas and associate, bachelor, masters and doctorate degrees for a donation of \$75 to \$180, depending on the degree.

- Bumphus & Matthew Bumphus, using a mail order address in Washington, DC, for promoting a scheme with claims that buyers would "receive \$1,000 in advance for addressing envelopes & \$600 monthly for mailing letters."

- Cecily Vane of Boston, MA, for promoting "New Miracle Bustline Plan" that claimed the user could transform a flat bustline into shapelier measurements at incredible speed.

To help you when shopping by mail, there are guidelines:

- Read catalogs carefully. Compare prices in several catalogs, & compare catalog prices with store prices.

- Find out if the merchandise is offered on a satisfaction guaranteed or money-back basis—before you order.

- Place your order at least 4 weeks before you want the merchandise—mail orders do take time. Check for a cut off date after which delivery will not be guaranteed before a certain day. This is important when ordering for Christmas & other gift occasions.

- Never send cash through the mail. Pay by check or money order & be sure to include any shipping & handling charges. Consider these charges when comparing prices.

- Be sure to clearly indicate your name & address on the order &, if it is a gift, where it is to be sent.

- Keep a record of your order: name & address of company, date you placed order & number of the money order or bank check.

- Check your order promptly when you receive it to make sure it is correct & not damaged. Notify the company immediately if there is a problem.

If you should run across a mail-order company that you think is using deceptive advertising, report it to the Chief Postal Inspector, Postal Service, Washington, DC 20260.

Consumer advisors appointed

President Ford has announced the appointment of 5 members to Office of Consumer Affairs' (OCA) 12-member Consumer Advisory Council:

Beatrice K. Chernock, Councilwoman-at-large, Philadelphia, PA; Rodolfo B. Sanchez, National Director of the Coalition of Spanish-speaking Mental Health Organizations, Washington, DC; Currin V. Shields, Director of the Community Services Center, Continuing Education Division, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Muriel Stevens, hostess of Muriel Stevens Show, Las Vegas, NV; & the reappointment of Edna DeCoursey Johnson, Director of Consumer Services, Baltimore (MD) Urban League.

Names & places

CONSUMER NEWS annually updates its selective list of consumer offices within Federal departments & agencies. Listing in this issue is the latest since Aug. 15, 1975. More information about consumer services of departments & agencies is available in *Guide to Federal Consumer Services*, which is free from Guide, Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Buying, selling & saving Education

ADVERTISING, CREDIT & FRAUD

Margery Smith, Acting Director
Bureau of Consumer Protection
Federal Trade Commission
Washington, DC 20850
202-523-3727

BANKS

Carolyn Aldrich
Assistant for Education & Information
Office of Saver & Consumer Affairs
Federal Reserve System
Washington, DC 20551
202-452-3667

BUSINESS PRACTICES

John Kearney
Director, Office of Ombudsman for Business
Commerce Department
Washington, DC 20230
202-377-4054

MORTGAGES & SAVINGS

Robert S. Warwick
Office of Housing & Urban Affairs
Federal Home Loan Bank Board
Washington, DC 20552
202-376-3262

STOCKS & BONDS

Frank J. Donaty Jr., Chief
Branch of Investor Service
Securities & Exchange Commission
Washington, DC 20549
202-523-5516

TAXES

A. James Golato
Office of Public Affairs
Internal Revenue Service
Washington, DC 20224
202-964-4021

Consumer affairs

Virginia H. Knauer,
Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
Washington, DC 20201
202-245-6164

David Peterson, Executive Director
Consumer Information Center
General Services Administration
Washington, DC 20469
202-566-1794

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Jane Hoyt
Office of Education
Washington, DC 20202
202-245-2956

CONSUMER & HOMEMAKING EDUCATION

Bertha King
Office of Education
Washington, DC 20202
202-245-3478

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Francis Lynch
Development Disabilities Office
Social & Rehabilitation Service
Washington, DC 20201
202-245-0335

STUDENT LOANS & GRANTS

Skee Smith
Office of Education
Washington, DC 20202
202-245-7949

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Beverly Blondell
Office of Education
Washington, DC 20202
202-245-8592

Elderly

Virginia Douglas
Office of Public Inquiry
Administration on Aging
Washington, DC 20224
202-245-0230

Energy

ELECTRICITY

William L. Webb, Director
Office of Public Information
Federal Power Commission
Washington, DC 20426
202-275-4006

GENERAL

J. Penno, Director
Consumer Affairs & Special Impact
Federal Energy Administration
Washington, DC 20461
202-961-6055

NATURAL GAS

William L. Webb, Director
Office of Public Information
Federal Power Commission
Washington, DC 20426
202-275-4006

NUCLEAR

John A. Harris
Director of Public Affairs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555
202-492-7715

Environment

Aleda Evans
Public Information Center
Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, DC 20460
202-755-0707

Housing

GENERAL

Gwen King, Director
Office of Consumer Complaints
Housing & Urban Development Dept.
Washington, DC 20410
202-755-2257

REAL ESTATE & MOBILE HOMES

Constance Newman
Assistant Secretary for Consumer Affairs & Regulatory Functions
Housing & Urban Development Dept.
Washington, DC 20410
202-755-8702

Mail

Thomas Chadwick
Consumer Advocate
Postal Service
Washington, DC 20260
202-245-4550

Product safety

CARS

Gilbert Watson, Chief
Consumer Services
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Washington, DC 20590
800-424-9393
or 202-426-0123

DRUGS

Dr. Ruth White
Office of Consumer Inquiries
Food & Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852
301-443-1016

FOOD

Nancy Steorts
Special Assistant to Secretary for Consumer Affairs
Agriculture Dept.
Washington, DC 20250
202-447-3165

Dr. Ruth White
Office of Consumer Inquiries
Food & Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852
301-443-3170

OTHER CONSUMER PRODUCTS

William White, Director
Bureau of Information & Education
Consumer Product Safety Commission
Bethesda, MD 20207
301-492-6504

Recreation & parks

Lena Beauregard
Departmental Liaison
Interior Dept.
Washington, DC 20240
202-343-6007

Office of Public Inquiry
National Park Service
Washington, DC 20240
202-343-4747

Transportation

AIR

Jack Yohe, Director
Office of Consumer Advocate
Civil Aeronautics Board
Washington, DC 20428
202-673-5526

BUS & TRAIN

Warner L. Baylor
Consumer affairs Officer
Interstate Commerce Commission
Washington, DC 20423
202-275-7252

CARS, ROADS & MASS TRANSIT

Antonina P. Uccello,
Director
Office of Consumer Affairs
Transportation Dept.
Washington, DC 20590
202-426-4518

Speaking out on air bags

This week **Transportation Dept.** is holding a public hearing in Washington to help decide the question of whether the agency should issue a rule requiring "passive restraints" — safety devices such as air bags that operate in a crash without any action by the car's occupants [CONSUMER REGISTER: July 1]. In the 7 years that the agency has been considering such action, dissensions have developed over the cost, effectiveness &, basically, the question of whether the Federal Government should mandate added crash protection for consumers — making the air bag decision one of the most controversial issues facing the public today.

Now that the issue is under public debate, the Transportation Secretary is asking consumers — as well as industry & government officials — to make their views known so that he can better determine what kind of restraint system (seat belts, combination seat & shoulder belts, air bags or a combination of these or other devices) consumers prefer. Therefore, since the beginning of July & running until Sept. 17, Transportation is inviting public comment that, along with the testimony presented at the public hearing, will be evaluated before Transportation reaches its decision on what kind of passive restraint system it will propose.

By the time the hearings started, Transportation had already received 500 comments from consumers, public interest groups, government officials, businessmen & representatives of the major industries involved — the car & insurance companies — on the restraint system issue. While many of these letters from industry were requests to testify at the hearing, letters from consumers, public interest organizations, government traffic experts & business highlight some of the basic arguments for & against passive restraints. In general, arguments against passive restraints, such as air bags, center around such issues as (1) cost—it now costs approximately \$300 for an air bag as optional equipment on a full-sized car; (2) belief that there has not been enough practical experience with air bags to prove that they will not be set off inadvertently & cause an accident; (3) feeling that consumer should have the freedom to choose whether he wants crash protection or not; (4) question of whether requiring passive restraints is excessive governmental regulation. On the other side, proponents argue that (1) air bags will save many more lives—an estimated 11,800 lives annually—and prevent many disabling injuries—an estimated 172,000 annually; (2) many consumers are not using seat belts—recent study found that drivers were unprotected in almost two-thirds of the 1976 cars surveyed; and (3) if required in all cars, mass production would hold costs down.

CONSUMER NEWS has excerpted some of the comments sent to Transportation on this issue.

ARGUMENTS FOR:

- Unity Mutual Life Insurance Co., Syracuse, NY: "give serious consideration to making air bags mandatory because the information . . . seems to convincingly prove that they do reduce fatalities & serious injuries, regardless of the cost involved."

- A medical doctor from Kettering, OH: "A few of the cars equipped with air bags have been involved in serious accidents & it is almost miraculous how the drivers of those cars have survived (usually without serious injury) what otherwise would have been a fatal accident."

- Ralph Nader, Washington, DC: "There is no indication that mandatory seat belt usage (even if seat belts were as effective as passive restraints, which they are not) will ever be accepted in this country. [I urge that Transportation] announce a proposed rule mandating passive restraints as soon as possible but no later than the 1980 model year. . . ."

- Allstate Insurance Co., Northbrook, IL: "Thousands of lives & hundreds of thousands of injuries have resulted & will result from the delay of this action [by Transportation]."

If you are interested in making your views known on this issue, you should write — before Sept. 17 — to: Secretary of Transportation, Washington, DC 20590; indicate on the envelope that your letter concerns "FMVSS 208" (the specific rule covering restraint systems).

ARGUMENTS AGAINST:

- Dallas, TX consumer: "I cannot see the sense of having to pay the additional cost for the purchase of an automobile with these bags in them while I can now use . . . my lap & shoulder belts."

- Consumer Action, San Francisco, CA: "We are against restraint systems that limit the consumer's freedom of choice. All passive & active systems should be available to the consumer at his option & without added cost."

- Highway Safety Research Institute, Ann Arbor, MI: "The air bag restraint is a promising protective system that deserves further study. At this time, there is not enough evidence to objectively establish either its efficacy in crash loss or its reliability in widespread use."

- Ford Motor Co., Dearborn, MI: "[The company sees the] necessity for undertaking a large-scale field test which will clearly identify the effectiveness of air bag systems in actual traffic accidents."

- Detroit, MI consumer: "I believe any system of auto occupant safety controls should be open to the buying public but that the public should be able to use these systems voluntarily . . . without it being mandated by the Government."

Recalls

CRUISE CONTROL—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has ordered General Motors to recall 1965 & 1967 Buick Wildcats, Electra 225s & early production Cadillacs (except Eldorados) with Cruise Control. According to NHTSA, these cars are subject to engine mount failure, which may result in sudden throttle jamming & loss of vehicle control, creating an unreasonable risk of accident, injury or death. General Motors has agreed to correct this hazardous condition free of charge for all owners who respond to the recall notices.

SHIRTS—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announces recall of cotton sportswear tops which may be dangerously flammable. Distributed by Michael Milea/Peter Sinclair, these adult sized "unisex" shirts—cotton pullovers in various styles, colors & designs—were sold during the late summer & fall of 1974 by the following companies: Jerold Men's Shops, Inc., Brookline, MA. (Adam & Eve retail shops in the Boston area); G. Fox & Co., Hartford, CT., a retail division of the May Company; & the Garbage stores located in Iowa City, IA (other stores located in Des Moines, Davenport & Cedar Rapids, IA & in Overland Park & Lawrence, KS.). Under consent orders signed with CPSC, the firms have agreed to notify customers who may have purchased these tops by putting a warning statement in customers' monthly billing statements, through signs posted in the stores announcing the recall & by placing ads in the local newspapers. The firms then have the option of either replacing the tops with those that are not flammable or of refunding the purchase price to consumers.

chase price to consumers.

What to do: If you think that you may have bought one of these garments, return it to the store where purchased. For more information on the recall, you may also want to contact CPSC by calling its toll-free hotline at 800-638-2666.

JEEPS—American Motors Corp. Detroit, MI, announces recall of over 22,000 1976 jeeps because of possible defects in the steering mechanism. According to AMC, certain CJ-5, CJ-6 & CJ-7 models must be inspected for possible loosening of the bolts holding the steering gear & bracket to the vehicle frame. If these bolts become loose, the steering gear will rattle & excessive play in the steering system will occur. By continuing to operate the jeep in this condition, a total loss of steering could occur, possibly leading to a vehicle crash.

AMC is also recalling 279 Cherokee, Wagoneer & Truck vehicles because of a possible interference between the front wheel brake hose anchor bracket & the sway bar link. As a result of this interference, the front wheel brake hose anchor brackets, brake fluid supply tubes & brake hose must be replaced. The recall campaign involves 207 "Myersnow" vehicles & 72 "Swagbar" vehicles.

What to do: If you own one of the affected vehicles, you probably will be receiving a recall notice from AMC telling you what steps to take. However, if for some reason you do not receive this notice & believe that you may have one of the vehicles involved in these recall campaigns, AMC recommends that you contact your dealer to arrange to have your vehicle inspected & repaired. Your dealer will make the necessary repairs at no cost to you. For more information on the recall, you may want

to contact AMC by calling the toll-free hotline at 800-521-7000 (in Michigan the number is 800-572-9570).

MINTS—Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has announced recall of more than 6,500 cases of candy mints because they were tinted with Red Dye No. 2, a food coloring that has been banned since Feb. 12. Being recalled are Delson Brand Merri-Mints, Delson Brand Green Merri-Mints, Newton Brand Cream Mints & Delson Brand Mint Thins. Distributed nationwide, the mints were manufactured by Delson Candy Co., Englewood, NJ. FDA said the food coloring was added to the mints after the date the ban went into effect.

WORM PROBE—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announces recall of approximately 6,000 "Baitcatcher" worm probes manufactured by Terran Industries, Inc., Tustin, CA. The probe consists of a partially insulated metal rod & an off-on switch, attached to which is a plug & cord. The worm probe uses electric current to bring worms to the surface but according to CPSC, the product may present a substantial risk of electric shock to users.

What to do: If you purchased a "baitcatcher," discontinue using it & promptly return it to the place of purchase or to Terran Industries, Inc., 17204 McFadden, Tustin, CA 92680. Terran will either refund your money or give you a receipt which can be exchanged for the safely modified "Model II Baitcatcher" which is expected to be in production within the next 30 to 60 days.

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